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[redacted]
Central Intelligence Agency

Washington, D. C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

19 April 1985

Pakistan: Military Capabilities Against
Soviet Aggression from AfghanistanSummary

Pakistan plans a defense-in-depth against a large-scale Soviet attack from Afghanistan. Pakistani forces would take advantage of the rugged terrain along much of the border to slow and harass a Soviet offensive. Islamabad would expect US assistance to defend against large-scale Soviet incursions into Pakistan. [redacted]

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The Pakistanis regard the Soviet presence in Afghanistan as a long-term military threat to Pakistan's security. They do not believe the Soviets at present have the capability for major military operations against Pakistan. Islamabad wants to avoid a military confrontation with the Soviets and will continue to act with restraint in response to minor provocations along the border, but probably would battle Soviet or Afghan troops making a concerted cross-border attack. The Pakistanis also probably would defend against Soviet/Afghan air attacks much deeper than those which have already occurred. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] of the Pakistan/Afghanistan/Bangladesh Branch, South Asia Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 19 April 1985 was used in its preparation. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to Chief, South Asia Division, at [redacted]

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For their part, the Soviets would have difficulty mounting large-scale operations in Pakistan's border regions without first substantially augmenting their forces, improving their logistics, and reducing insurgent effectiveness in Afghanistan. Although the Soviets probably could hold Pakistani territory, they would be faced with protracted guerrilla warfare in difficult terrain by tough, highly-motivated Pakistani irregulars defending their tribal territories, the prospect of Pakistan Army counterattacks, and the possibility that the conflict would escalate and draw in the United States. [REDACTED]

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Pakistan's Defense Strategy

Pakistan's defenses and doctrine in the west call for defense-in-depth of the North-West Frontier and Baluchistan Provinces. They would take advantage of the terrain that would limit opposing ground forces to a few border crossings. The Pakistanis would try to delay an initial offensive by defending strategic passes while attempting to outflank the main axis of attack. As a last resort, they would destroy bridges and dams to slow a drive toward Punjab or Sind Provinces. Islamabad would expect US assistance--including arms supplies and logistic support--to defend against large-scale Soviet incursions into Pakistan. [REDACTED]

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Pakistan's Defenses

Primary responsibility for defending the border belongs to the 50,000-man paramilitary Frontier Corps, which lacks heavy weapons and has only limited mobility. Only four of the Pakistan Army's 18 divisions are currently deployed opposite Afghanistan, and one of these divisions will soon be relocated to the Indian border. Except for a few battalions at each of the major border crossings, the Army occupies defensive positions some 15 to 30 kilometers away from the border, where they are better able to protect important supply lines. [REDACTED]

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Pakistani forces opposite Afghanistan are weak in logistics, mobility, and firepower. Little has been done since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to improve the logistic infrastructure in the west or to facilitate the movement of forces from the east. [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Pakistan: Military Capabilities Against Soviet
Aggression from Afghanistan [REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: Pakistan: Military Capabilities Against Soviet
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